Aristophanes' Hiccups and Pausanias' Sophistry in Plato's *Symposium*

Abstract: This paper concerns the episode of Aristophanes' hiccups in Plato's *Symposium*. The sequence is typically understood to be, not merely a comic aside, but rather a means by which Aristophanes offers commentary on the claims of other speakers in the dialogue. But where scholars have focused on the significance of this passage concerning Eryximachus' account of Eros, in this paper I argue that the hiccups episode also serves as a critique of Pausanias' speech. Particularly, I suggest that the hiccups episode serves as a critique of the sophistic elements of Pausanias' account of Eros.

I

It is not often the case that one can expect anything of particular significance to be communicated with a hiccup. One may be forgiven, then, for following A. E. Taylor in seeing the episode of Aristophanes' hiccups in Plato's *Symposium* (185c3-e5, 188e3-189a6) as an enjoyable, if ultimately empty piece of 'Pantagruelism' (1959.216). But this would be to neglect that Plato's dialogues are carefully and meticulously constructed works, so much so that even an episode of gastric disturbances of this kind is laden with meaning. This has been recognised increasingly in more contemporary *Symposium* studies, in which Aristophanes' hiccups have been the subject of no small number of analyses.[1] Scholars have identified multiple functions of the hiccups, and these are most commonly understood to be: i) to

introduce disorder to the sequence of the speeches, grouping Aristophanes' speech with the more significant contributions of Agathon and Socrates;[2] ii) to make light of the grandiloquent, purple prose of each of the earlier speakers, Phaedrus, Pausanias, and Eryximachus;[3] iii) and even to be a small revenge on Plato's part, making Aristophanes an object of ridicule, tit-for-tat, for the playwright doing the same to Socrates in the *Clouds.*[4] But perhaps most emphasis has been given iv) to the significance of the hiccups in respect to Eryximachus' speech.[5] The relationship of the hiccups to the speech of the doctor is immediately evident. First, the two relevant passages that constitute the hiccups episode book-end Eryximachus' encomium. Second, Aristophanes' himself directly makes this connection by highlighting the benefits of disorder in curing the hiccups (189a1-6) – the holding of breath, gargling, and sneezing prescribed by the doctor himself – as a criticism of Eryximachus' central claim that all health (and, moreover, all good in the cosmos) comes only from bringing dissonant elements into harmony. And it is perhaps also not entirely without significance that Eryximachus' name literally means 'belch beater'.

With the exception of the third reading (to which I respond at length in the last section of this paper), I broadly agree that each of these interpretations captures an important function of the hiccups episode. But in this paper I argue for another largely unrecognised function of the hiccups episode: as a comment on the encomium of Pausanias. This is a function that was summarily dismissed by R. G. Bury (1909), and has never been given serious consideration since.[6] However, I believe that a close examination of the hiccups episode evidences an undeniable connection to Pausanias' speech, and reveals a substantial, multifaceted critique of this character. Among its other functions, the hiccups episode serves to ridicule the sophistic elements of Pausanias' speech, including its overly-complex form, and its embroidered content, in

which a low-brow defence of pederasty is dressed up with 'lofty' concepts of 'virtue' and 'the soul'.

Furthermore, I contend that this reading is significantly enriched by consideration of Aristophanes' *Clouds*. In Old Comedy all emissions of the body – whether burping, farting, defecating, or speaking – are meaningful acts.[7] And the *Clouds* particularly holds a special relationship with the *Symposium*. In the *Clouds* Aristophanes offers a portrait of Socrates, and in the *Symposium* Plato, Socrates' student, offers his portrait of Aristophanes. I argue that the hiccups episode draws on the conventions of Old Comedy to create a criticism of sophistry that parallels that of the *Clouds*. In this way, the episode of the hiccups represents significantly less antagonism between Plato and Aristophanes than is often thought.[8] Indeed, I argue, it is evidence that Plato supports Aristophanes' general criticism of the sophists. But the episode of the hiccups will also be used by Plato to distinguish the empty sophistry of Pausanias, whose speech warrants only a comic reaction, from the substantial and valuable philosophy of Socrates, whose speech necessitates a much more meaningful response.

I begin by providing textual motivation for reading the hiccups episode as a commentary on Pausanias' speech. I then detail *how* the hiccups illuminate and ridicule both the form and content of Pausanias' speech. I then conclude this paper by considering the wider implications of this episode, and particularly how it is used to distinguish the intellectual enterprises of Pausanias and Socrates.

II

A connection between Aristophanes' hiccups and the speech of Pausanias is established in the following passage:

> Παυσανίου δὲ παυσαμένου (διδάσκουσι γάρ με ἴσα λέγειν οὑτωσὶ οἱ σοφοί) ἔφη ὁ Ἀριστόδημος δεῖν μὲν Ἀριστοφάνη λέγειν, τυχεῖν δὲ αὐτῷ τινα ἢ ὑπὸ πλησμονῆς ἢ ὑπό τινος ἄλλου λύγγα ἐπιπεπτωκυῖαν καὶ οὐχ οἷόν τε εἶναι λέγειν, ἀλλ᾽ εἰπεῖν αὐτόν (ἐν τῇ κάτω γὰρ αὐτοῦ τὸν ἰατρὸν Ἐρυξίμαχον κατακεῖσθαι) 'ὦ Ἐρυχίμαχε, δίκαιος εἶ ἢ παῦσαί με τῆς λυγγὸς ἢ λέγειν ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ, ἕως ἂν ἐγὼ παύσωμαι.' καὶ τὸν Ἐρυξίμαχον εἰπεῖν 'ἀλλὰ ποιήσω ἀμφότερα ταῦτα· ἐγὼ μὲν γὰρ ἐρῶ ἐν τῷ σῷ μέρει, σὺ δ᾽ ἐπειδὰν παύσῃ, ἐν τῷ ἐμῷ. ἐν ᾧ δ᾽ ἂν ἐγὼ λέγω, ἐὰν μέν σοι ἐθέλῃ ἀπνευστὶ ἔχοντι πολὺν χρόνον παύεσθαι ἡ λύγξ· εἰ δὲ μή, ὕδατι ἀνακογχυλίασον. εἰ δ᾽ ἄρα πάνυ ἰσχυρά ἐστιν, ἀναλαβών τι τοιοῦτον οἵῳ κινήσαις ἂν τὴν ῥῖνα, πτάρε· καὶ ἐὰν τοῦτο ποιήσῃς ἅπαξ ἢ δίς, καὶ εἰ πάνυ ἰσχυρὰ ἐστι, παύσεται.' 'οὐκ ἂν φθάνοις λέγων,' φάναι τὸν Ἀριστοφάνη· 'ἐγὼ δὲ ταῦτα ποιήσω.' (185c3-e5)

> With Pausanias' pausation – the wise teach me to talk in such balanced phrases – Aristodemus said that it was Aristophanes' turn to speak; however, he had just got the hiccups (from satiety or something else) and was unable to speak, but he did say – the doctor Eryximachus was lying on the couch next to him – 'Eryximachus, it is only just that you either stop my hiccups or speak on my behalf until I do stop.' And Eryximachus said, 'Well, I shall do both. I shall talk in your turn, and you, when you stop hiccupping, in mine. And while I am speaking, see if by holding your breath for a long time, you make the hiccups stop; but if they do not, gargle with water. And if they prove very severe, take something with which you might irritate your nose, and sneeze;

and if you do this once or twice, even if the hiccups are severe, they will stop.' 'Go ahead and speak,' Aristophanes said. 'I shall do the rest.' (trans Benardete, 2001)

The entire passage is related to Pausanias' speech through the key phrase, 'Παυσανίου δὲ παυσαμένου (διδάσκουσι γάρ με ἴσα λέγειν οὑτωσὶ οἱ σοφοί)' ('With Pausanias' pausation – the wise teach me to talk in such balanced phrases'), a comment intruded into the narrative by Apollodorus, who in the outermost frame relates the events of Agathon's party. Apollodorus begins with a pun on Pausanias' name, 'Παυσανίου δὲ παυσαμένου', a word play ably captured in the translation 'Pausanias paused'.[9] As Howatson notes (2008.17 n. 76), this is a particularly well-crafted pun, balancing two assonant terms, each comprised of four syllables.

There are a number of things that grant this pun particular prominence in the passage. The first is simply that it is a particularly clever pun, as just noted. The second is that, following this linguistic flourish, Apollodorus immediately calls attention to his pun, and suggests that he learnt this manner of speaking from 'οἱ σοφοί', a term which literally means 'the wise men', but which by the end of the 5th Century came to connote specifically the proponents of newer modes of education, particularly the Sophists, and also rhetoricians and orators of the Gorgianic school (Dover, 2012.88). Given Apollodorus here is discussing his rhetorical flourish, this is clearly the way the term is being used here. And given Plato's (and Plato's Socrates) concerns about sophistic education in general, any mention of sophistry warrants immediate attention.

The third reason that this pun is particularly significant is that it recalls the sophistical elements of Pausanias' own speech. Pausanias is a figure who is associated with the sophists, and is portrayed in the *Protagoras*, along with his partner Agathon,

as a student of Prodicus (315e2-4), himself a renowned wordsmith.[10] And his *encomium* of Eros manifests various sophistic and rhetorical devices, which infuse his entire speech. A number of scholars have identified the particularly Isocratic (or Gorgianic) signatures in his encomium, including its emphasis on balanced antitheses, rhyming, and rhythm.[11] But of particular significance here is that we find rhyming of the kind in which Apollodorus engages throughout Pausanias' speech: δουλείας δουλεῦειν ... δοῦλος (183a6-7); πρᾶγμα διαπραττομένου (183b4-5); πονηρῷ τε ταὶ πονηρῶς (183d7); δουλεύειν ... δουλείαν (184b7-c1); πλουσίῳ πλούτου (185a1). Apollodorus' own pun brings these elements to the fore, and simultaneously Pausanias' use of assonance marks Apollodorus' own as significant to Pausanias' speech.

The fourth thing that makes Apollodorus' pun conspicuous is Apollodorus himself. In the frame of the dialogue Apollodorus describes himself as a 'companion' (ἑταίρος, 172b6) of Socrates, but ultimately shows himself as not much more than an obsessed sycophant; Bloom describes him aptly as an "odd and fanatical groupie" (2001: 74). And, importantly, he comes across as a man of no genuine philosophical character. There is no suggestion that he engages with Socrates in philosophical investigation; instead, he states that he prefers to listen to others philosophize (173c ff.). His 'contribution' to philosophy, as he sees it, is to commit everything that Socrates says to memory (173a ff.), and this ethos is manifest in his retelling of Agathon's party, where he interjects at only four points. In three of these he interrupts the story merely to flag lapses in memory either on his own part, or that of Aristodemus (178a1-5, 180c1-4, 223c ff.) – another Socratic sycophant who gate-crashed Agathon's party as Socrates' plus-one. The pun at 185a1, then, represents his only 'positive' contribution to his recount, and it is a comment of sufficient

sensitivity, given its relationship to Pausanias' speech, to be otherwise uncharacteristic of the individual. Corrigan and Corrigan-Glazon state that the pun is "quite foreign to the tongue of Apollodorus" (2004: 57), and shortly thereafter identify the comment as one of the 'vanishing signatures' of Plato as author of the dialogue. I see this as an overstatement. Not withstanding that the entire dialogue manifests Plato's signature, as I argue later, but the comment is not *entirely* out of character for Apollodorus. Indeed, like Aristodemus, whom Apollodorus dismisses as an unremarkable runt of a man (173b ff.), Apollodorus' 'Socratic' characteristics take the form only of mimicry of Socrates' own mannerisms. But where Aristodemus affects Socrates merely in dress (173b6), Aristophanes' mimics Socrates in his conversational style.[12] Apollodorus comes across as a '*philologos*', a man who experiences the greatest gratification in listening to, memorizing, and occasionally mimicking fine speeches (173c3-6). Given this proclivity it is not entirely out of character for Apollodorus to produce the pun at 185c3, although whether he did so as a conscious nod to Pausanias' speech, or as a spontaneous reaction to his unthinking intuition of these features, remains very much an open question. But regardless, that a figure of Apollodorus' character constructed this pun as his only real contribution to the story serves to make it all the more prominent.

I have discussed at some length the conspicuousness of Apollodorus' pun because it is through this that the entire passage is related to Pausanias' speech. Particularly significant here is that the punning of Pausanias' name does not end with Apollodorus' clever remark. Instead, this punning continues throughout the rest of the passage, as Aristodemus introduces the hiccups, and discusses the ramifications and possible remedies of this affliction with Eryximachus. With great frequency, the speakers here make use of terms that manifest the root 'παυ-', as the passage extends

Apollodorus' pun. By reproducing the passage while emphasizing the relevant terms we can see the frequency of use of these verbs:

> **Παυσανίου** δὲ **παυσαμένου** (διδάσκουσι γάρ με ἴσα λέγειν οὐτωσὶ οἱ σοφοί) ἔφη ὁ Ἀριστόδημος δεῖν μὲν Ἀριστοφάνη λέγειν, τυχεῖν δὲ αὐτῷ τινα ἢ ὑπὸ πλησμονῆς ἢ ὑπό τινος ἄλλου λύγγα ἐπιπεπτωκυῖαν καὶ οὐχ οἷόν τε εἶναι λέγειν, ἀλλ᾽ εἰπεῖν αὐτόν (ἐν τῇ κάτω γὰρ αὐτοῦ τὸν ἰατρὸν Ἐρυξίμαχον κατακεῖσθαι) ‘ὦ Ἐρυχίμαχε, δίκαιος εἶ ἢ **παῦσαί** με τῆς λυγγὸς ἢ λέγειν ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ, ἕως ἂν ἐγὼ **παύσωμαι**.’ καὶ τὸν Ἐρυξίμαχον εἰπεῖν ‘ἀλλὰ ποιήσω ἀμφότερα ταῦτα· ἐγὼ μὲν γὰρ ἐρῶ ἐν τῷ σῷ μέρει, σὺ δ᾽ ἐπειδὰν **παύσῃ**, ἐν τῷ ἐμῷ. ἐν ᾧ δ᾽ ἂν ἐγὼ λέγω, ἐὰν μέν σοι ἐθέλῃ ἀπνευστὶ ἔχοντι πολὺν χρόνον **παύεσθαι** ἡ λύγξ· εἰ δὲ μή, ὕδατι ἀνακογχυλίασον. εἰ δ᾽ ἄρα πάνυ ἰσχυρά ἐστιν, ἀναλαβών τι τοιοῦτον οἵῳ κινήσαις ἂν τὴν ῥῖνα, πτάρε· καὶ ἐὰν τοῦτο ποιήσῃς ἅπαξ ἢ δίς, καὶ εἰ πάνυ ἰσχυρὰ ἐστι, **παύσεται**.’ ‘οὐκ ἂν φθάνοις λέγων,’ φάναι τὸν Ἀριστοφάνη· ‘ἐγὼ δὲ ταῦτα ποιήσω.’[13]

This punning then continues in the second passage that makes up the hiccups episode, at the conclusion of Eryximachus' speech:

> ‘ἢ εἴ πως ἄλλως ἐν νῷ ἔχεις ἐγκωμιάζειν τὸν θεόν, ἐγκομίαζε, ἐπειδὴ καὶ τῆς λυγγὸς **πέπαυσαι**.’
>
> ἐκδεξάμενον οὖν ἔφη εἰπεῖν τὸν Ἀριστοφάνη ὅτι ‘καὶ μάλ᾽**ἐπαύσατο**, οὐ μέντοι πρίν γε τὸν πταπμὸν προσενεχθῆναι αὐτῇ, ὥστε με θαυμάζειν εἰ τὸ κόσμιον τοῦ σώματος ἐπιθυμεῖ τοιούτων ψόφων καὶ γαργαλισμῶν, οἷον καὶ ὁ πταρμός ἐστιν· πάνυ γὰρ εὐθὺς **ἐπαύσατο**, ἐπειδὴ αὐτῷ τὸν πταρμὸν προσήνεγκα.’ (188e3-189a6)

> ‘or if you do intend to make a different eulogy of the god, proceed to do so, since you have stopped hiccupping.’
>
> He then said that Aristophanes accepted and said, ‘It has stopped, to be sure; not, however, before sneezing had been applied to it. So I wonder at the orderly decency of the body desiring such noises and garglings as a sneeze is; for my hiccups sopped right away as soon as I applied the sneeze to it.’ (trans Benardete, 2001)

Outside of the hiccups episode there are only four instances of terms manifesting the ‘παυ-’ root (outside of uses of Pausanias’ name): at 190c8, 191c7, 212d2, and 217d6. Given the prominence of Apollodorus’ pun on Pausanias’ name in the prelude to the hiccups episode, the connection of this to assonance in Pausanias’ speech, the frequency of uses of terms with the ‘παυ-’ root throughout the hiccups episode, and the relative infrequency of terms with the root throughout the rest of the dialogue, I believe that this evidences a clear connection between the hiccups episode and Pausanias’ encomium. In both passages that make up the episode there is a consistent punning on Pausanias’ name. And in Apollodorus relating the initial pun to the sophists, the extension of this pun through the entire hiccups episode suggests that (in addition to other functions) Aristophanes’ hiccups serve as a commentary on certain sophistic features of Pausanias’ speech. Determining what these features are, and the nature of the commentary that the hiccups provide, is the task to which I now turn.

III

There are two particular features of Pausanias’ *encomium* that I believe Aristophanes’ hiccups ridicule. The first is a formal feature of the *encomium*: its over-complex and

'conceptually rich' composition. And the second is its content, concerning Pausanias' defence of pederastia through appeal to the 'lofty' ideals of virtue and wisdom. These elements of Pausanias' speech recall Aristophanes' portrait of sophistic thought in the *Clouds*.

While considerable attention has been given to the treatment of Aristophanes' hiccups, a pregnant remark concerning the cause of the hiccups has gone without much attention. Although he expresses that he is not entirely certain of the cause, Aristodemus is said to have attributed Aristophanes' hiccups to the comic poet 'stuffing' himself with one thing or another: 'τυχεῖν δὲ αὐτῷ τινα ἢ ὑπὸ πλησμονῆς ἢ ὑπό τινος ἄλλου λύγγα ἐπιπεπτωκυῖαν καὶ οὐχ οἷόν τε εἶναι λέγειν' (185c6-7) ('he had just got the hiccups (from satiety or something else) and was unable to speak', trans Benardete, 2001). Both Bury (1909: 44) and Rosen (1999: 120) reads from this that the hiccups are a result of Aristophanes' over-indulging on food. The term 'πλησομονή' ('satiety') usually refers to satiety of food, but the qualifying phrase 'ἢ ὑπό τινος ἄλλου' ('or from some other thing') allows for other possibilities. Particularly, I suggest that it is not food on which Aristophanes has been stuffed, but rather the conceptually rich account of Eros with which Pausanias has offered for his audience's consumption.[14]

Among the encomia offered at Agathon's party, Pausanias' immediately stands out for its technicality, complexity, and conceptual thickness. The only speech that rivals Pausanias' in this respect is perhaps Socrates' own. But Pausanias is a considerably lesser intellect, his speech is fully half as long as Socrates', and absent here are all of those elements of Socrates' speech that make it more digestible: the use of priestesses, fables, and mysteries, among others. The result is an encomium that is

incredibly dense, plodding, intensely difficult concerning its language and conceptual topography, and, ultimately, for all that, deeply unsatisfying.

Pausanias begins his speech by noting that his account of Eros is not 'simple' (ἁπλῶς, 180c5), and he explicitly flags the difficulty of the concepts upon which he draws at various points throughout his speech (182b1 and 183b4).[15] In the first part of his speech, Pausanias' central claim is that eros, like all things, is in itself neither noble nor base, but only becomes so when done nobly or basely (181a4-6). In order to justify this claim Pausanias sets up a great number of antinomies, most prominently between: Pandemian and Uranian Aphrodite; Pandemian and Uranian Eros (as a god); Pandemian and Uranian eros (as a desire); body and soul; the public and the private; and between hedonism and the concern for virtue and wisdom. In the second half of the speech, Pausanias then sets himself the task of defending the complex customs towards pederastia manifest in Athens particularly, against the laws of Elis and Boeotia on the one hand, and Persia on the other, who grant lovers too great and little license in pursuing young men in turn (182a ff.). What follows is a convoluted account in which eros can only be pursued nobly when performed by both the lover and beloved with a mind to two principles of action ('νόμω', 184c ff.): 1) the principle of pederasty, in which the lover is encouraged at all points by all parties in pressing his suit, while the beloved is constantly dissuaded from acquiescing to these advances, particularly through the reprobation and admonition of his carers, peers, and elders; and 2) the principle of virtue, in which the beloved ought only eventually acquiesce to the lover for the sake of virtue, and not out of concern for money, position, pleasure, or any other 'base' or 'common' interests.

But for all of the demands that his speech places on its audience, the account is sufficiently unwieldy that it collapses under its own weight. By the end of his

encomium Pausanias has ended up contradicting himself on several major issues. These contradictions have been noted frequently in the literature,[16] but the most egregious examples are: i) his move from stating that laws should be in place to defend boys against bad lovers, to claiming that the force of law should be directed towards bad beloveds; ii) the substitution of his initial claim that eros is noble or base in being done nobly and basely with the position that the success of a lover's suit alone is what warrants him praise; and iii) that after claiming that lovers are concerned with virtue, that good lovers willingly enslave themselves – 'wishing to slave as no slave slaves' (ἐθέλοντες δουλείας δουλεῦειν οἵας ἂν δοῦλος οὐδεις, 183a6-7) – to their beloved for the sake of sexual gratification, and even breaking vows to the gods in this pursuit. Pausanias' muddled mindset is perhaps most clearly shown in his discussion of this third issue when he coins the straightforwardly contradictory term 'ἐθελοδουλεία', 'free enslavement' (184c6). Given this, neither his audience nor the reader can be left in any doubt of his inability to offer a consistent account of eros.

In his *encomium* of Eros, Pausanias has undertaken an ambitious project. But it is one that ultimately ends in failure and contradiction, as he over-stuffs both his speech and his audience with an account of eros that proves to be too conceptually rich. I suggest that it is in being force-fed this 'feast of concepts' that is the cause of Aristophanes' hiccups, and that the hiccups themselves serve to highlight and make light of the conceptual richness of Pausanias' speech.

Two points serve to confirm further that the hiccups speak to the conceptual verbosity of Pausanias' encomium. First, Aristophanes' speech in the *Symposium* stands in particular juxtaposition to Pausanias' on this point. Despite the fact that Aristophanes' fable of the origins of humanity is a subtle, nuanced, and sophisticated

tale, as an account of eros it is conceptually simple: Humanity originally took the form of circlemen, who, due to their hubris against the gods, were split in two. Eros, as a desire, is our longing to be reunited with our other half, and sexuality is the palliative that we apply to gain temporary respite from this longing. And if we are pious, and respect and fear the gods, we may one day be rewarded with what we truly desire: reunification with out other half. In contrast to Pausanias' long-winded emptiness, Aristophanes' encomium is a paradigm of pithy simplicity.

And second, as a critique of the over-complexity of Pausanias' speech, the hiccups episode recalls the mockery of the 'grand proofs' (μεγάλοις σημείοις, 369) associated with the sophists that we find in Aristophanes' *Clouds*. The sophists' use of clever language and complex argument is an issue raised throughout the play (260-61, 316-18, 636-38, 662-695, 1247-51), and the contrast between plain, simple speaking and argumentative flourish is a key point of contrast between the Right and Wrong arguments. But the following two passages are most relevant here: i) the introduction of the Clouds chorus (269-96), in which they haughtily attest their omnipresence and omnipotence in the world; and ii) Socrates' complex meteorological account of the origins of thunder, in which he appeals to the new science to argue that thunder operates according to the same interactions of water as the rumblings of the stomach. (373-97). In both cases these grand accounts are met with derision by Strepsiades, but of particular significance is the mode of Strepsiades' mockery: in both cases through appeals to farts:[17]

> 293-96: I do revere you, illustrious ones, and I'm ready to answer those thunderclaps with a fart; that's how much I fear and tremble at them. And right now, if it's sanctioned, and even if it isn't, I need to shit!
>
> 394: So that's why the words are similar, *bronte* 'thunder' and *porde* 'fart'!

In the *Clouds*, Strepsiades' bodily functions mock the grand arguments of the sophists as over-complex, and meaningless to the common man, who has a mind only for much simpler ideas. The hiccups of the *Symposium* may represent a less embarrassing bodily function, but they serve a similar role here: to ridicule Pausanias' account of eros as long-winded, and ultimately ridiculous, as for all of its complexity, it offers an unsatisfying, contradictory account of eros.

In addition to speaking to foundational elements of the form of Pausanias' speech, the hiccups episode also serves to highlight and ridicule central elements of its content. The second feature of this encomium that the hiccups mark out is Pausanias' defence of pederastia. The target here is not Pausanias' support of pederastia *per se*. By the end of the 5th Century pederastia was a generally accepted practice throughout Greece (Dover, 1966.45, cf. 2012.3).) – although it would always be questioned in certain quarters – and in his own speech in the *Symposium*, Aristophanes praises most highly the 'masculine' lovers who comprise two male halves (191e ff.). Later in his speech Aristophanes will mock the relationship of Pausanias and Agathon (193b ff.), but this comment goes more to the effeminacy of the pair (Scott and Welton, 2008.64) – an ironic feature of male lovers – and particularly to the evident delicacy of Agathon.[18] The function of the hiccups here instead serves to ridicule the manner in which Pausanias defends pederastia, specifically his appeal to 'lofty' concepts like wisdom, virtue, and the soul. Pausanias recommends pederastia (of a Uranian kind) as most noble because of the purported concern for virtue of both the lover and the beloved, but upon closer inspection the speech can be seen ultimately as a reasonably transparent attempt by a pederast to justify, and mark for particular praise, his own altogether 'common' interest in having sex with boys. By prioritising the functioning of the body, the hiccups episode

highlights this, and serves as a mockery of Pausanias' snobbish justification of his own sexual tastes.

Pausanias begins his speech with the claim that Eros (and therefore eros, as a desire) is not singular, as Phaedrus assumes in his own encomium, but double (180c ff.): there is, on the one hand, Uranian Eros, and on the other, Pandemian Eros. Through this distinction Pausanias is able to introduce an element of elitism into his account of love, associating (what he sees as) all the positive aspects of love with Uranian Eros, and all of the bad aspects with Pandemian Eros. According to Pausanias, Uranian eros is the love only of people of the highest quality, being associated with the soul, the masculine, stability, self-regulation, and virtue. By contrast, Pandemian eros is the refuge of the scoundrel, whose interests lie in the body (of men and women indifferently), instability, licentiousness, and hedonism. For our present purposes, the most significant antinomy here is between body and soul.[19] The love of Pandemian eros, according to Pausanias, is entirely worldly and embodied, as it is concerned with the pleasure of the body, and particularly sexual gratification. Uranian eros, by contrast, is properly understood as 'heavenly' because it is the love that is concerned exclusively with the otherworldly constitution of one's partner: the soul. Through this distinction Pausanias denounces the overwhelming majority of sexual practices as base, and marks out pederastia of the Uranian kind alone as noble. It is the only love that is concerned with ideals such as *sophia*, *nous*, *sôphrosunê*, *phronêsis*, and *aretê*, all of which are terms that reoccur frequently throughout Pausanias' speech. According to Pausanias, Uranian pederastic lovers alone are deserving of praise because they are attracted to each other for the sake of virtue.

Pausanias couches his defence of pederasty through reference to the 'lofty' ideals of the virtues of the soul. But for all of its highfalutin talk of wisdom and

temperance and the like, various claims Pausanias makes lead us to question the sincerity of his account. And a closer examination of the speech shows it to be a relatively transparent justification of a far more prosaic reality: Pausanias, and by implication all pederastic lovers, are people who just want to have sex with young boys. Various elements of the speech cumulatively lead to this conclusion, including his description of the different demands made on each party and their ultimate goals in the affair. To begin, let us consider the demands placed on the lover. Concerning this Pausanias states that he ought: i) to receive all encouragement in his pursuit of a young man, even when engaging in behaviour that would otherwise be shameful, sleeping on doorways, acting like a slave, and even breaking vows to the gods (182d ff.); ii) be given full legal license in pursuit of his suit (181e ff.); and iii) be cheered on in his success (182d ff.), even when this involves deception (184e ff.). By contrast, the beloved is expected: i) if he is found to be overly forthcoming with his affections, to receive every reprobation from his carers, peers, and elders (183c ff.); ii) to be restrained by law from acquiescing to his lover too quickly, lest he tie himself to his lover before his lover has judged his quality; and iii) ultimately to acquiesce to his lover only for the sake of virtue. Echoing contemporary practices of 'slut shaming', the lover is guided in his action by principles of freedom and success, and the beloved by temperance and fear of disapproval.

Given this, it appears that it is the beloved alone, and not the lover, who is concerned with virtue, and this is further confirmed when we consider the goals of each party in pursuing a relationship. Pausanias gives much attention to the fact that the beloved, in acquiescing to his lover, should do so solely with an eye to the virtue that the lover may impart to him (184b). But never does Pausanias explicitly state what the lover gets out of this. He does clarify that Uranian lovers are attracted to

particular boys because of the (apparent) quality of their soul, rather than their body (181d ff.), but this goes to the motivation of their suit, and not its end. As he himself is Uranian, the lover is presumably already virtuous of soul – hence why beloveds would be wise to acquiesce to him. And given that the boy is only just young, and acquiesces for the sake of virtue, the boys themselves are not virtuous, so the lover cannot expect to receive moral improvement from the boy. Socrates clarifies this point explicitly in the preliminary discourse with Agathon before his own encomium, where he shows that we love only what we lack (200a ff.). So what is it that the lover does get from the boy? The answer appears to be simply: the use of the beloved's body.

It is clear that the boy, in respect both to the manner of erotic pursuit and the desired goal, is the only party on Pausanias' account who is at all concerned with virtue. The lover, by contrast, is in it only for access to the beloved's body, for the sake of physical pleasure in sexual gratification. For all of its lofty talk of virtue and wisdom, Pausanias' account manifests a far more pedestrian, and altogether Pandemian picture of pederastia. And Aristophanes' hiccups serve to highlight and ridicule this feature of the encomium. Immediately following Pausanias' high-flown talk of virtue and soul, we are presented with a situation that shows forth how people are irrevocably tied to and motivated by the realities and demands of the body. However much he wants to speak, Aristophanes is rendered unable to do so by a bout of hiccups, and forced to wait until the cure takes effect. Similarly Pausanias' interest in young men, dressed up however it may be, is ultimately another reality of the body. The hiccups episode shows how absurd it is to dress up a simple bodily reality through appeal to lofty ideals such as a concern for the soul and virtue.

As in the previous discussion, we see evidence of just this lesson in Aristophanes' own speech. After Pausanias cleaves Eros in two – a distinction that Eryximachus utilises in turn – Aristophanes will then reunify it. Various scholars have noted the significance of this move,[20] but only by recognising the connection of Aristophanes to Pausanias' speech through the hiccups episode can we account properly for its motivation. Aristophanes unifies eros and makes it an entirely bodily desire. It is that desire that we feel to be physically reunited to our other half, with whom we previously made a circle. In making this move, Aristophanes dismisses from here any suggestion that we love out of concern for virtue or the soul, concepts with which Pausanias dressed this desire.

And in serving to ridicule the lofty talk of Pausanias' speech, the hiccups episode recalls another central feature of Aristophanes' mockery of sophistry in the *Clouds*. Here particularly I note Socrates' entrance into the play, in which he is suspended in the air (222 ff.). Socrates tells Strepsiades that he assumes this unorthodox, and entirely ludicrous position so that he may have a proper view of the cosmos (228-34). By suspending himself in the air, Socrates suggests that he is able better to appreciate, not only meteorological phenomena, but all the realities of the world, significant and banal. Socrates here is shown to be ridiculous in being a figure who literally has his head in the clouds, and because he makes some special claims to knowledge in doing this. And the absurdity of high-minded folk like Socrates is established particularly through contrast with Strepsiades, a figure who is entirely and unfailingly a creature of the body. In the *Phrontisterion*, his reception of wisdom repeatedly takes the form of farting or shitting, and although he does leave the school with some little portion of their 'wisdom', his concern for virtue or the good of the soul is far from his mind. His only interest in sophistry is, and only ever has been, to

settle his debts without payment. In the *Symposium* Pausanias is also a person who desires to rise above the realities of the body, but in highlighting the evident influence of the body in guiding his erotic tastes, the hiccups episode marks him for ridicule in this regard.

In the preceding discussion I have given further weight to the claim that the hiccups episode is much more than a charming, but empty piece of mise-en-scéne, added only to provide some levity to the *Symposium*. Instead, it is a meaningful episode in the dialogue that serves a number of important and philosophically significant functions, and particularly here I have expounded its relationship to Pausanias' *encomium* of Eros. In this respect the hiccups episode provides insightful and multifaceted commentary on Pausanias' speech, serving to highlight and to ridicule the sophistic elements of this encomium, particularly its over-complex composition, and its lofty defence of pederastia. But the implications of this analysis are wider still, and in recognising the relationship of the hiccups episode to Pausanias' speech particularly we get important insights concerning the nature of Plato's philosophical exercise, particularly in its relation to other modes of thought. I have noted that the hiccups episode recalls Aristophanes' critique of sophistry in the *Clouds*, and in the next section I argue that the hiccups episode ought to be considered a properly comic episode (in the mode of Old Comedy), and one that Plato utilises to distinguish the empty sophistry of pseudo-intellectuals like Pausanias from the genuinely substantial philosophy of Socrates.

IV

To begin my discussion of the wider implications of the hiccups episode I consider Bury's argument against reading this passage as a commentary on Pausanias' speech in more detail, as doing so demands recognition of a fundamental feature of the *Symposium*, and indeed all of Plato's dialogues. Bury argues that we cannot advance such a reading because to do so would demand that we understand Aristophanes to be faking his hiccups, when all evidence suggests that he is genuinely afflicted (1909.xxiii). Underlying this point is the assumption that the hiccups episode can only be of significance for Pausanias' speech if the character Aristophanes himself consciously intended this to be so. The more general principle averred here is that, for the actions of a character in a dialogue to be significant, the character him- or herself must consciously infuse this action with that meaning. But in arguing this way, Bury has fundamentally misunderstood the nature of Plato's dialogues. Neither the *Symposium*, nor any of the dialogues, are works in which the author hopes to tread lightly, so as to reproduce some historical event as faithfully as possible. Plato is not a Socratic sycophant after the mould of Aristodemus and Apollodorus. Instead, the dialogues are works every feature of which is infused with meaning through the careful and meticulous construction of their author. And it is not, as Corrigan and Corrigan-Glazon suggest, that the signature of the author manifests only at certain points in the dialogue, like Apollodorus' pun (2004.57). Instead, the signature of the author is present in every element of the dialogues (although, as with all great authors, he does not always make the reader conscious of this, and does much to ensure that they are not), in shaping the arguments, characters, setting, and action. And even in a bout of hiccups. I labour this point because, in recognising this, we can read the hiccups episode as significant to Pausanias' speech, not because the character Aristophanes intended them to be so, but because Plato constructed the episode in

such a way so as to make it so. And particularly here he did so to highlight the sophistic elements of Pausanias' speech.

The critique of sophistry is a common theme throughout Plato's dialogues, and sophistic thinking, as well as a number of prominent sophists, are skewered by Socrates' prodigious elenctic skills. The pressing question is why, and to what end, Plato eschews the dialectical commentary so frequently used in the dialogues – and which, although less frequent in the *Symposium*, still take a prominent place at particular points (199c ff., 201c ff.) – in order to illuminate and critique Pausanias' sophistry, and opts instead to do so through afflicting his character Aristophanes with a bout of hiccups. I suggest that, in addition to other functions mentioned above, Plato constructs the hiccups episode here to respond to Aristophanes' critique of sophistry in the *Clouds*.

Of all of the characters that populate the *Symposium*, it is significant, and most appropriate, that it is Aristophanes who undergoes the hiccups. As I noted above, bodily functions of various kinds are frequently featured in Aristophanes' plays, and although the hiccups are a slightly more polite gastric function than those emitted in Aristophanes' plays (no character having the hiccups in any surviving plays), the hiccups episode is genuinely Aristophanic. Although it may escape the notice of certain modern audiences, no ancient audience would have failed to appreciate the hiccups episode in the *Symposium* as a conventional comic affair. In the introduction of this paper I noted that certain scholars have read this passage as antagonistic to Aristophanes, a small revenge on Plato's part, paying back the playwright for making a mockery of his teacher in the *Clouds*. There is perhaps some of this going on in this passage, but as we have seen this episode manifests a much more significant, and altogether less antagonistic relationship to Aristophanes' plays. The hiccups episode,

as we have seen, understood in its connection to Pausanias' speech, recalls Aristophanes' critique of sophistry in the *Clouds*. But it does more than this. In this passage Plato casts Aristophanes as a comic hero, who, after the manner of Strepsiades, meets a sophistic thinker with a bout of hiccups, showing up Pausanias' account as ever so much hot air. Like the sophists of the *Clouds*, Pausanias' 'wisdom' is shown up as being complex without being sophisticated, difficult without being explanatory, and wide-ranging without being deep. And although we have seen that, for Plato and Aristophanes alike, even a bout of hiccups can be meaningful, from the perspective of wisdom, Pausanias' speech, and the mode of thinking in which it engages, is no more informative than a series of humorous gastric ejaculations.

In the hiccups episode Plato does not simply recall Aristophanes' critique of sophistry; in addition, it also affirms it. But perhaps the real genius of the passage is that it performs this function, while simultaneously working to distinguish Pausanias' sophistic enterprise from that of Socrates' philosophical enterprise – a distinction that was ultimately collapsed by Aristophanes in the *Clouds*.[21] Ironically, Plato brings this about first by constructing for Pausanias an account of Eros that shares many *prima facie* similarities with Socrates' own speech in the *Symposium*, and furthermore echoes many Socratic tropes throughout Plato's dialogues. These include: i) his priority of the soul over the body; ii) his consequent emphasis on virtues of the soul, particularly *sophia*, *nous*, and *sôphrosunê*; iii) his association of the soul with stability and the body with instability, which is an important point of contrast for Socrates between these two entities particularly in the *Phaedo*; iv) his central claim that actions are not noble or base in themselves, which recalls Socrates' claim in the *Gorgias* (88c ff.) that actions are only good or bad when done with wisdom (Corrigan and Glazov-Corrigan, 2004.57); v) his use of the phrase 'αὐτὸ καθ'αὐτό' at 183d5, a phrase that

Socrates will use to describe the form of Beauty at 211b1, and which is a standard description of the forms in other dialogues; and vi) apart from Socrates (or rather Diotima), he is the only speaker to use the term 'φιλοσοφία' (182c1, 183a1), an activity he marks out for particular praise. The cumulative effect of these features is that Pausanias' speech, despite being a piece of empty sophistry, is one that appears to share many affinities with Socrates' own speech in the *Symposium*, and with Socrates' philosophical enterprise more generally.

But through the hiccups episode Plato is able to highlight the distinction between Pausanias' questionable contribution, and the genuinely significant encomium of Socrates. In having Aristophanes meet Pausanias' speech with hiccups, it is shown to be an empty piece of sophistry. His response to Socrates' account, by contrast, marks it as a significantly more rigorous, and entirely more thoughtful account. Socrates' speech warrants from Aristophanes, not some crass bodily function; instead, as we are told at 212c ff., Aristophanes hopes to offer a response to certain claims Socrates had made concerning his own speech. But from this also the comic poet is dismissed, as a (purely) comic response is not appropriate for a speech of this significance. At this point Alcibiades interrupts the proceedings, and, in the guise of Dionysus, appears to fulfill Agathon's prophecy that the god himself will judge Socrates' claim to (or denial of) wisdom (175e8-10, Scott and Welton, 2008.156). Commentators are split on whether Alcibiades' speech works to undermine or affirm Socrates' own account of Eros,[22] and although I am confident of the latter reading, a full discussion of this matter is beyond the scope of this paper. What is important is that no easy answers concerning Socrates' wisdom are forthcoming from Alcibiades' account of their aborted love affair. And, as a response to Socrates' encomium, Alcibiades' speech is a passage that demands careful thought,

and rigorous reflection – and certainly something much more substantial than a few hiccups.

Concerning its wider role in the dialogue, the function of the hiccups passage is complex. On the one hand, it serves to recall and to affirm Aristophanes' critique of sophistry in the *Clouds*, and applies this to a figure, Pausanias, whose speech proves as ridiculous and nonsensical as that spouted by the laughable figures of an Aristophanean farce. But on the other hand it also serves to exempt Socrates from this critique. Socrates is not a Pausanian figure, constructing difficult accounts, which ultimately prove to be all so much hot air, no more meaningful than a hiccup. Instead, the hiccups episode works to show forth Socrates as someone for whom a comic response is inappropriate. Unlike the sophists, his philosophical exercise is marked as significant and meaningful, and so warranting of an appropriately thoughtful response.

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[1] See particularly Stanley Rosen (1999.90-91), R. E. Allen (1991.20), Allan Bloom (2001.95-102), Kevin Corrigan and Elena Glazov-Corrigan (2004.62-67), Stephen Lowenstam (1986), and Gary Alan Scott and William A. Welton (2008.56-57).

[2] See Allan Bloom (2001.95-96), Mary Nichols (2004.188), and Arlene Saxonhouse (1985.18-19). See also Lownestam (1986), but rather than arguing that the hiccups introduce disorder to the speeches, Lowenstam suggests that the hiccups ensure that the order of the speeches harmonises with Diotima's account of the developing erotic tastes of the lover in the *Scala Amoris* (210c5-212c3) passage towards the end of Socrates' speech.

[3] See Allan Bloom (2001.95-96), Mary Nichols (2004.188), and Robert Wardy (2002.19).

[4] See R. G. Bury (1909.xxiii), Stanley Rosen (1999.90-91), and Gary Alan Scott and William A. Welton (2008.56-57).

[5] See R. E. Allen (1991.20), Kevin Corrigan and Elena Glazov-Corrigan (2004.63), Richard Hunter (2004.61), Gary Alan Scott and William A. Welton (2008.57), and Robert Wardy (2002.19).

[6] Bury rejects such a reading for two reasons. First, because he argues Apollodorus' comparison of Pausanias to a sophist at 185c3, in the first line of the hiccups episode, does enough to show Pausanias' speech as empty rhetoric (xxiii). And second, Bury argues that such a reading must posit Aristophanes' hiccups as faked, where they appear genuine (xxiii). I will address each of these concerns in the course of the paper.

[7] For more extensive examinations of the particularly 'gastric' focus of the populations of Aristophanes' plays, see particularly Cedric Whitman (1964). In addition, concerning the equivalence posited between gastric emissions and *logoi* in the *Clouds* see Daphne O'Regan (1992).

[8] See n.4.

[9] Most commentators offer a similar translation: Lamb (1925), 'Pausanias … made a pause' Allen (2001), 'Pausanias paused'; Nehamas and Woodruff (in Cooper, 1997), 'Pausanias finally came to a pause'; Benardete (in Benardete and Bloom, 2001), 'With Pausanias' pausation'; and Howatson (in Howatson and Sheffield eds, 2008), 'Pausanias came to a pause'.

[10] Prodicus is mentioned by Socrates earlier in the dialogue (177b4), and is granted the epithet 'βέλτιστος', 'best' or 'most good'. However, this attribution is not without irony, as in introducing Prodicus he refers to him as 'τοὺς χρεστοὺς σοφιστάς'. This is an expression generally used to mean 'a good/wise practitioner (of some craft)', but,

as Dover notes, it also became the most typical expression of denunciation of sophists by the beginning of the 4th Century (2008.88).

[11] For more extensive commentary on the rhetorical features of Pausanias' speech see Bury (1909.xxvii-xxviii), Allen (2001.20), and Corrigan and Glazov-Corrigan (2004.56-57). Bury and Allen see these influences as Isocratic, while Corrigan and Glazov-Corrigan call them Gorgianic, but as Isocrates was a student of Gorgias there is no real disagreement here.

[12] His mimicry of Socrates' conversational style can be seen particularly in his playful insulting of his friend for his pursuit of wealth (173c ff.) and his self-deprecation in regard to his possession of wisdom and virtue (173d ff.).

[13] I note also that this is not the only pun at work in this passage. In addition, there is a play on 'λύνξ' and 'λέγειν'. Aristophanes' hiccups prevent him from speaking; a situation that will only be relieved upon the application of the sneeze treatment, which serves as a release to Aristophanes' gastric tension. But, as we shall see, the hiccups themselves speak volumes about Aristophanes' opinions of Pausanias' speech.

[14] G. K. Plochmann (1963.18) makes a similar assertion, arguing that Aristophanes has been stuffed on "a surfeit of speeches".

[15] I also note that when at 182a7-8 Pausanias claims that the role of eros in the city is 'easy to understand' (νοῆσαι ῥᾴδιος), at least in a general sense, the amount of work it has taken him even to reach this point shows this claim to be entirely unjustified.

[16] See Bury (1909.xxvii), Rosen (1999.81), Corrigan and Glazov-Corrigan (2004.60), and Scott and Welton (2008.55).

[17] All translations of the *Clouds* in this paper come from Henderson (2005).

[18] I also note that this critique recalls the mockery of homosexuality in the *Clouds* (177-79, 347-50, 355, 908, and 1024), and particularly that of the Right speech (1083-

94), in which the 'wide-arsed' (εὐρυπρώκτων) are ridiculed more for their effeminacy, rather than their sexual orientation. I also note that Agathon's effeminacy is the defining characteristic of the poet as portrayed in Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae*.

[19] I note that this contrast strongly recalls the distinction between the Right and Wrong speeches in the *Clouds*, and the forms of education that they recommend. For an extended discussion of the character of the two speeches see Nussbaum (1980).

[20] See particularly Corrigan and Glazov-Corrigan (2004) and Scott and Welton (2008).

[21] Although Nussbaum (2008) has shown that the *Clouds* does differentiate, at least concerning certain nuances of thought, between Socratic practice and the mode of sophistry represented by Wrong Argument (such as Socrates' asceticism versus Wrong Argument's licentious hedonism), it does posit a more fundamental similarity between Socrates and the sophists, particularly concerning their shared commitment to submitting all matters of wisdom to rational reflection.

[22] The view that Alcibiades speech serves to undermine Socrates' account finds its most prominent advocates in Lear (1999) and Nussbaum (2001). Among those scholars who see Alcibiades' speech as a confirmation of Socrates' account are Allen (1991), Anderson (1993), Edmonds (2000), Corrigan and Glazov-Corrigan (2004), Reeve (2006) and Sheffield (2006).